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C O N F I D E N T I A L LJUBLJANA 000533

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DEPT FOR EUR/NCE, AF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/17/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [SI](#)
SUBJECT: DARFUR: SLOVENIAN AID WORKER/PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY IN
JAIL

REF: LJUBLJANA 380

Classified By: COM Thomas B. Robertson for reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) Summary. Slovenian aid worker and sometime Presidential envoy, Tomo Kriznar, has been sentenced to two years in jail and a EUR 2000 fine on charges of entering Sudan illegally, spying and spreading lies about Sudan, according to Slovene press reports. The press has turned its scornful pen on both the President's office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for playing hot potato with Kriznar and, in the process, damaging Slovenia's credibility with the International Community. After initially seeking to distance themselves from Kriznar's personal decision to enter Sudan without a visa, both the MFA and the President's office have been actively engaged in seeking his release. Thus far, there has been no indication that the Government of Slovenia or the President's office will seek assistance from the USG. End Summary.

12. (U) In February 2006 when President Janez Drnovsek hoped to travel to Sudan and Darfur to assess the humanitarian situation, he had engaged with Tomo Kriznar, a Slovene citizen and long-time aid worker in the region, for advice and assistance. He also made him an official presidential envoy for the purpose of the trip and to follow up generally on Drnovsek's interest in Darfur. The President's trip never materialized and the request for a visa for Sudan for Kriznar was also withdrawn by the President's office. Kriznar, armed with the President's letter proclaiming him a presidential envoy, traveled to Chad, and, without the President's approval (though apparently with his knowledge), crossed over into Sudan earlier this year. In mid July when his situation became difficult, on the advice of the President's office, Kriznar turned himself over to AU forces hoping they would deliver him safely out of Sudan. Instead, they delivered him to the Sudanese authorities who have since tried and convicted him for illegal entry, spying and spreading lies.

13. (U) Both the President's office and the MFA have been clear that Kriznar entered Sudan of his own will and with no official support. Early on they suggested he had made this personal decision and that while they were working for his release, he was to blame for his current situation. After weeks of assuming the Government of Sudan would simply expel Kriznar, both the President's office and the MFA have been forced to engage more vigorously. They have been working through the German Embassy in Khartoum and with the Sudanese Embassy in Vienna. Perhaps expressing some frustration at the lack of direct engagement by the Government of Slovenia, the German Ambassador to Sudan, Stephan Keller told Radio Slovenia he thought the MFA should get more politically involved and send someone down to help. The MFA has said it is sending its consul from Cairo to Sudan posthaste. The

President's office has also gotten international NGOs Amnesty International and the Aegis Trust to help raise awareness of Kriznar's plight.

¶4. (C) Comment. This case is symptomatic of the disconnect that exists between President Drnovsek and the Government of Slovenia, particularly when it comes to foreign affairs. When Drnovsek was prime minister, he was deeply engaged in foreign affairs. As president, and particularly in the last 12 months, his interest has remained high. Unfortunately, he seems neither to value nor to respect the need to consult with the Government on his initiatives. In return, the MFA seemed to be happy, in this instance, to see Drnovsek squirm under withering scrutiny from the press which lambasted Drnovsek for sending out an envoy without even the little protection a diplomatic passport could provide, and questioned the wisdom of his uncoordinated foreign policy initiatives.

¶5. (C) Comment Continued: The press has also pointed out that this lack of coordination and the attempt by both the President's office and the MFA to dodge responsibility for Kriznar only lessens Slovenia's credibility as a serious player in international affairs. While the MFA is acutely aware of the damage caused to its credibility by Drnovsek's ill advised foreign policy ventures, Drnovsek, until now, has refused to accept that his public comments and initiatives should be vetted by the Government. The case of Tomo Kriznar, however, drives home the potential negative consequences of Drnovsek's maverick actions. In light of our criticism of Drnovsek's engagement on Darfur in June (reftel) and his advisor's vigorous defense of the President's right to engage, we are not surprised that they have not reached out to us for assistance. Drnovsek, perhaps naively, believed he could manage this without the help of the MFA and

certainly without assistance from the USG. The German Ambassador in Khartoum also does not seem to have a "get out of jail free" card for Kriznar and it is clear that the Government of Slovenia will have to do much more, even in the lazy days of August, to win the release of their compatriot. We should be prepared, in any case, for the GOS to approach us eventually to use our good offices to win the release of this well intentioned if misguided humanitarian. End Comment.
ROBERTSON